

Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) voted Thursday for a bill that will allow families to keep more of their hard-earned assets at the difficult time of a loved one's death.

H.R. 4154, the Permanent Estate Tax Relief for Families, Farmers and Small Businesses Act of 2009, permanently extends the estate tax exemption at the current levels of \$3.5 million for individuals and \$7 million for couples. The exemption currently allows people to leave their estate, tax-free, up to these amounts. It was scheduled to expire in January. That would have meant a hefty tax on many struggling families, farmers and small business owners.

"This bill means that people can pass on more of their estate to their families rather than having to pay the federal government for property and resources acquired during their life," said Congressman Rodriguez. "Hard-working Americans pay enough taxes during their lifetime and shouldn't be taxed further at the time of their passing."

The bill passed the House 225 to 200 Thursday.

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